

REMARKS

Claims 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35 and 37 are pending in this application.

By this Amendment, claims 15, 17, 27 and 29 are amended for clarity. No new matter is added.

I. Formal Matters

In the Office Action, claims 17 and 29 are objected to for not containing a period at the end of the claims. By this Amendment, claims 17 and 29 are amended as suggested. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35 and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. In particular, it is alleged that it is unclear how to form grooves with the recited total volume when a substrate is not positively recited. Applicant respectfully disagrees. This rejection is accordingly respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 15 and 27 are amended for clarity to remove unnecessary brackets and to provide superscripts for the noted units of measurement. Additionally, the area of the particular substrate to be polished is added. These claims recite a certain range of total volumes of the grooves relative to the area of a particular substrate to be polished. Thus, regardless of the actual size of the substrate, the grooves for polishing that particular substrate are formed to be within the recited range.

For example, standard semiconductor wafer substrates come in 6, 8 or 12 inch circular diameters (150, 200 or 300 mm, respectively). Applicant's Figs. 5-9, pg. 23, line 19 to pg. 24, line 3 and pg. 27, line 16 to pg. 29, line 4 show an example of use for a 300 mm diameter semiconductor wafer substrate in which this volume ratio is used to provide sufficient polishing agent to the substrate and achieve a good surface flatness without polishing flaws.

Independent claims 15 and 27 and claims dependent therefrom are concise and definite. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

II. Pending Claims 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, and 37
Define Patentable Subject Matter

In the Office Action, the previous indication of allowance has been withdrawn and claims 15, 17, 23, 25, 27, 29, 35 and 37 are now rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 7,125,318 to Muldowney. Additionally, claims 19, 21, 31 and 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Muldowney. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Muldowney has a U.S. filing date of November 13, 2003. Applicant claims priority from a PCT application (PCT/JP2004/013661) filed September 17, 2004, which claims priority from Japanese Patent Application No. JP2003-335939 filed September 26, 2003. Because Applicant's September 26, 2003 priority application predates Muldowney's U.S. filing date of November 13, 2003, Muldowney does not constitute prior art against Applicant's claims.

In order to perfect Applicant's claim for priority, an English-language translation of Applicant's Japanese Patent Application No. JP2003-335939 is attached. Because Applicant's claims are fully supported by this priority application, Muldowney does not constitute prior art. Therefore, the §102 and §103 rejections based on Muldowney are moot and claims 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35 and 37 are allowable. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35 and 37 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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WPB:SPC/add

Attachment:

English-language translation of JP 2003-335939

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